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9-16-2005

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Recommended Citation

Lupher, Eric, "Catalog of Local Government Services in Michigan" (2005). *Working Group on Interlocal Services Cooperation*. Paper 13.
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CRC Memorandum

No. 1079

A publication of the Citizens Research Council of Michigan

September 2005

CATALOG OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES IN MICHIGAN

Fiscal pressures on local units of government are increasingly causing policymakers to reexamine the operations of those governments. When confronted with an imbalance between revenues and expenditures, policymakers have three options. Ultimately local officials are left to decide among 1) asking for tax rate increases, 2) cutting service levels, or 3) finding alternative methods of delivering services. One such alternative is for local units to collaborate – to cooperate in the funding, governance, and delivery of services so that the costs are shared over a broader base than if each individual unit chose to provide the service(s) independently.

A first step in creating collaborative efforts is to know which communities currently are providing the same services. To assist in information sharing, the Citizens Research Council of Michigan has created a *Catalog of Local Government Services*. It is hoped that the *Catalog* will allow policymakers to identify services for which an alternative method of provision could lead to cost savings, identify partners for cooperative service delivery, and benchmark the menu of services in any unit against other units of similar size.

The Survey

To gather information about the services provided and the methods used to deliver those services, two surveys were created: one for counties and another for cities, villages, and townships. These surveys listed 126 services that counties might provide and 116 services that cities, villages, and townships might provide. Some are services provided directly to residents; others are functions that happen behind the scenes in the general operation of government. The surveys asked city managers and mayors, village managers and presidents, township clerks, and county administrators and clerks to indicate which services are provided to their residents, and if the services are provided, whether they are provided by the units themselves, through cooperative arrangements, by other units, or by contract with a private provider.

The surveys were mailed to every city, village, township and county government in 24 Michigan counties (see **Table 1**). These 670 units of government represent only 36 percent of the 1,859 general purpose units of government in Michigan, but encompass 78 percent of the total state population.

Surveys were returned by 464 of these governmental units, representing an overall response rate of about 70 percent. As can be seen in **Table 2** (on page 2), the response rate was fairly uniform across all types of government: about 70 percent for counties, cities, and townships; 65 percent for villages. The response rate also was fairly uniform across population sizes. Efforts were made to address inconsistencies in the data (such as when a township indicated a service is provided by the county and the county said it relied on the local units to provide that service). No efforts were made to question the accuracy of responses. The data reflect the survey responses.

Table 1
Local Units Surveyed by County

<u>County</u>	<u>Cities</u>	<u>Villages</u>	<u>Townships</u>	<u>Total</u>
Alpena	1	0	8	10
Bay	4	0	14	19
Calhoun	4	5	19	29
Clinton	2	7	16	26
Eaton	5	5	16	27
Genesee	11	4	17	33
Hillsdale	3	6	18	28
Ingham	5	3	16	25
Jackson	1	7	19	28
Kalamazoo	4	4	15	24
Kalkaska	0	1	12	14
Kent	9	4	21	35
Livingston	2	2	16	21
Macomb	12	3	12	28
Marquette	3	0	19	23
Midland	2	1	16	20
Monroe	4	5	15	25
Muskegon	7	4	16	28
Oakland	30	10	21	62
Ottawa	6	1	17	25
Saginaw	3	5	27	36
St. Clair	6	2	23	32
Washtenaw	4	3	20	28
Wayne	<u>32</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>44</u>
TOTAL	160	83	403	670

In addition to the 646 cities, villages, and townships, each of the 24 county governments were sent a survey.

Citizens Research Council of Michigan

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The Data

Counties. The 126 county services were broken down into 23 categories. In general, there is much less collaborative provision of services among counties than is found among cities, villages, and townships or between the municipalities and the counties. The survey results show that counties operate as service providers, often serving as the units that municipalities cooperate with, contract with, or simply rely on for the provision of services. Given the geographic size of counties, the relative lack of cooperation among counties is not terribly surprising. Michigan's less populated counties (which are largely not included in the *Catalog*) have higher levels of county-to-county cooperation, especially in the areas of mental health, courts, and solid waste landfills.

The role that counties play in inter-governmental cooperation is largely undetectable in their responses to the survey. Counties view themselves as service providers. However, survey responses from the local governments indicate that the counties play a vital role in collaborative efforts to provide services to the residents of the cities, villages, and townships within their boundaries. County governments are regional bodies and many local units are benefiting from the ability of counties to provide services efficiently over a wide geographic area. Automotive and telecommunications improvements continue to shrink the relative size of counties and make them potential providers of many more local government services.

While the county responses are reported in the *Catalog*, the balance of this paper will focus on survey responses from cities, villages, and townships.

Cities, Villages, and Townships.

The 116 municipal services were broken down into 26 categories. Analysis of the results by category reveal different degrees of self reliance, cooperation, reliance on the county provision of services, creation of special districts, and use of private providers for many of the categories.

As can be expected, the numbers and types of services provided by each unit tend to relate to the population served and the type of government adopted by the people. Aside from the functions that are part of the basic operations of local governments (payroll/benefits, accounting, elections, etc.), zoning is the only service almost uniformly provided across all types and sizes of government. Some services are commonly provided by cities and less frequently by villages or townships, including police and fire protection, building regulation, water, parking lots/structures, and parks and playgrounds.

Cooperation among Cities, Villages, and Townships

Cooperation among local units can take many forms. The *Catalog* identifies cooperative arrangements in the following ways: Column C – The unit provides this service by contract to another community; Column D – The unit jointly provides this service with another municipality; Column I – The unit has this service provided by another city, village, or township; and Column J – The unit has this service provided by a special authority/district.

The incidence of cities, villages, and

Table 2
Response Rates by Type of Governmental Unit

	Received	Possible	Percent
Counties	16	24	67%
Cities	114	160	71%
Villages	54	83	65%
Townships	<u>280</u>	<u>403</u>	69%
Total	464	670	69%

townships cooperating with each other varies by service category. By far, the category in which cooperative arrangements are most commonly identified is fire protection, either through direct cooperative arrangements or through the creation of special fire districts. Local governmental units also cooperate frequently in the provision of libraries, water and sewer services, and transit services. (See the box on page 7 for a list of the services most frequently indicated as cooperative ventures among cities, villages, and townships.)

While cities and villages tended to indicate that they cooperate in the provision of services more than townships, the differences are not significant. Similarly, there is little variation among the units of different population sizes in the number of cooperative arrangements for service provision.

Cooperation with/reliance on Counties

The role of the counties as providers of local government services in Michigan may be underappreciated. Local governments indicated they work with (Column F) or rely on (Column H) county governments to provide almost every type of service listed in the survey. The *Catalog* shows that townships and units serving relatively small population sizes (many of which are town-

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Table 3
Method of Service Delivery as Indicated by Respondents (by Percent)

	Does not provide or contract for this service	Directly provides this service	Also provides this service to another community	Jointly provides this service <i>with</i> :			Has this service provided <i>by</i> :				
				another municipality	a school district	the county	the state	the county	another municipality	a special authority/district	a private provider
	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k
<i>(1) Document Services:</i>											
Printing of Municipal Documents	7.7	60.0	0.5	0.4	1.1	3.6	0.5	3.6		0.4	20.8
Records/Archives	7.2	77.6	0.6	0.2		3.0	1.2	2.6	0.2		6.4
Document Destruction	9.8	72.2	0.2			0.4	0.6	0.4			13.9
<i>(2) Human Resources:</i>											
Training/Professional Development	14.9	32.7	0.6	3.3	0.9	5.2	8.7	7.3	1.3	2.4	21.3
Payroll/Benefits	5.0	80.0	0.2	0.2							14.2
<i>(3) Fiscal Services:</i>											
Property Assessing	1.0	58.2	0.4	3.2		7.9	0.2	5.9	7.3		15.4
Treasury Functions	1.0	88.4		0.6	0.2	6.0	0.2	1.2			1.5
Tax Collection	0.6	82.4	0.4	1.2	2.3	8.9	0.4	2.1	0.4		1.4
Accounting	1.4	87.0	0.4			0.4					10.1
Purchasing	2.3	87.1	0.2	1.3	0.2	2.1	3.5	1.7			1.5
<i>(4) Information Technology:</i>											
Management Information Systems	24.4	34.2	0.6	0.4		4.0	0.6	3.8	0.2	0.4	22.9
Geographic Information Systems	25.5	20.0	0.6	0.9	0.2	12.3	0.9	20.2	0.9	3.2	10.8
Website Development/Management	30.3	35.9	0.2	0.2	0.6	1.4	0.2	3.5			24.1
<i>(5) Elections:</i>											
Elections Administration	1.1	62.6	1.0	2.5	3.4	15.7	1.8	5.9	3.6		2.3
Records and Reporting	1.1	73.6	0.5	1.5	2.0	10.9	2.4	4.7	3.1		0.2
<i>(6) Buildings and Grounds:</i>											
Building Security	31.0	52.5		0.6	0.2	1.1	0.2	2.3	0.2		10.8
Janitorial Services	7.9	60.8	0.2	1.0		0.2					29.7
Cemetery Services	27.3	51.1	0.8	1.2		0.2			1.9	1.2	14.5
Mosquito/Moth/Insect Control	45.5	17.9		0.2		7.5	0.2	13.9	0.2	0.4	8.7
<i>(7) Fleet Services:</i>											
Purchasing	26.3	59.8	0.4	1.6	0.2	3.2	4.4	1.2		0.2	1.2
Vehicle Maintenance	24.1	42.3	0.4	1.1	0.2	0.7	0.2	0.2	0.2		29.1
Garage/Storage	29.0	63.2	0.4	0.6	0.2			0.2	0.2	0.2	4.5
<i>(8) Refuse Collection:</i>											
Solid Waste Collection:											
Residential	32.2	12.7	0.4	1.4		0.6		1.8	0.6	3.8	45.3
Non-Residential	48.3	6.2	0.4	1.2		0.2		2.1	0.6	1.0	37.4
Recycling	26.0	14.3	0.2	2.5		3.8		7.5	0.8	5.5	38.0
Landfill/Resource Recovery	47.8	4.5	0.4	2.5		2.9	0.4	7.2	0.4	4.1	23.4

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Table 3 (Continued)

	Does not provide or contract for this service	Directly provides this service	Also provides this service to another community	Jointly provides this service <i>with</i>			Has this service provided <i>by</i> :				
				another municipality	a school district	the county	the state	the county	another municipality	a special authority/ district	a private provider
	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k
<i>(9) Building Regulation:</i>											
Building Permits	3.4	63.9	1.1	3.2		2.7	0.4	11.3	1.7	1.9	10.5
Building Inspection	3.9	57.1	1.2	4.3		3.0	0.4	11.4	2.2	1.8	14.6
Code Enforcement	3.3	69.4	0.4	2.1		3.7	0.6	9.4	1.0	1.5	8.5
Well Permitting	24.7	8.1		1.0		15.8	2.3	41.9	1.5	1.0	2.7
Septic Permitting	26.0	7.3		1.0		14.9	1.7	42.6	1.5	1.0	2.7
<i>(10) Police:</i>											
911/Radio Communications	11.2	15.3	1.6	4.9		12.7	2.5	41.1	6.3	3.5	0.4
Officer Training	17.0	23.2	0.9	3.8	0.8	7.8	9.8	21.6	2.1	1.1	9.6
Patrol/Emergency Response:											
Street	17.3	35.9	0.4	2.5		7.0	4.9	27.5	2.1	0.2	0.4
Bike	47.9	26.7		1.1		3.4	0.9	14.5	1.7		0.2
Foot	53.1	23.0		1.3		3.0	1.1	13.1	1.5		
Horse	73.5	0.4		0.9		2.8	0.4	16.6	1.1		
Marine	62.8	1.7		0.4		4.8	1.7	23.7	0.6		
Helicopter	64.3			0.4		3.4	4.0	19.7	0.6	0.2	1.5
Detectives/Crime Investigations	17.0	27.9	0.2	2.7		8.2	7.8	32.7	1.9		0.2
Canine Unit	25.8	11.9	0.8	2.1		5.8	8.1	37.2	5.2	0.4	0.8
Emergency & Disaster Response Planning	8.7	22.0	0.9	6.3	1.4	17.7	6.4	27.7	2.6	2.1	1.5
Crime Laboratory	18.9	4.3		0.6		5.8	34.7	26.8	1.5	0.4	1.9
<i>(11) Corrections:</i>											
Jail(s)	20.5	4.7	0.4	1.1		10.6	5.3	55.1	1.3		0.8
Detention Center(s)	22.8	7.5	0.2	1.2		9.3	4.2	51.6	1.2		0.6
<i>(12) Animal Services:</i>											
Animal Licenses (dogs, etc.)	8.0	32.6	0.6	0.7		18.8	0.6	35.2	2.4		0.9
Animal Control	14.8	11.5	0.6	1.2		11.5	0.6	54.7	2.0		2.6
<i>(13) Fire:</i>											
Inspection	8.3	43.6	1.2	12.0		2.2	7.1	3.9	8.7	7.5	2.4
Training	4.2	39.0	1.3	14.4	0.2	4.3	5.8	4.5	8.0	7.9	9.3
Fire Hydrant Maintenance	19.5	47.6	0.6	8.7		1.3	0.4	3.8	7.0	6.2	2.3
Investigations	8.8	30.2	1.1	10.6		4.3	18.8	8.6	7.7	6.4	0.9
Fire Fighting/Rescue	2.1	52.5	4.9	17.9		1.1	0.6	1.5	9.6	8.9	0.8
Ambulance/EMS	7.6	24.0	1.8	10.8		5.0		9.1	6.3	7.5	27.5
Hazardous Material Handling and Response	6.5	22.6	2.1	13.3	0.1	11.8	4.7	17.2	6.5	6.2	6.5

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Table 3 (Continued)

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				another municipality	a school district	the county	the state	the county	another municipality	a special authority/ district	a private provider
	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k
<i>(14) Community and Economic Development:</i>											
Zoning Administration and Enforcement	3.1	82.9		0.4		1.5	0.2	5.0	0.4	0.2	6.0
Engineering	17.2	16.2	0.2	0.6		0.8	0.6	5.5	0.2		56.4
Surveying	27.5	8.3	0.2	0.4		1.7	0.4	7.5	0.2		51.8
Community Planning and Development	5.9	56.4		0.9	0.2	5.1	0.4	8.2	0.5	1.6	19.2
Business Retention/Expansion	33.9	30.6		1.2		3.9	3.5	11.1	0.6	3.3	6.0
Business Licensing	33.5	28.3	0.2	0.2		4.2	7.8	20.0	0.6		1.2
Restaurant/Food Regulation	29.0	3.0	0.2	0.2		8.1	9.7	44.0	0.8	0.4	1.2
Public Convention Center	72.8	3.2	0.2	0.6		1.9	1.5	8.0	1.5	0.9	3.0
Promotion/Tourism	54.6	11.0	0.2	0.8		2.4	3.9	11.2	0.8	3.7	6.9
<i>(15) Legal/Judicial Services:</i>											
Attorney/Legal Services	12.6	18.2	0.2	0.6		1.0	0.2	5.6	0.2	0.2	60.0
District Court	18.1	7.9	0.4	3.3		7.5	4.8	49.8	2.5	0.8	2.7
Mediation or Dispute Resolution	32.9	5.7	0.4	0.6		4.5	3.9	25.0	1.0	0.4	16.1
<i>(16) Roads and Bridges:</i>											
Construction/Improvement	5.4	18.2				18.4	9.7	30.3	0.2	0.7	17.0
Maintenance	5.6	31.0		0.5		17.3	6.5	31.9	0.2	0.5	6.5
Winter Maintenance	6.7	31.1	0.2			15.3	6.1	36.7	0.6	0.6	2.8
Signs and Signals	5.7	24.7	0.2	0.5		15.9	8.8	37.5	1.4	0.3	4.5
Street Lights	8.8	27.2	0.4	1.5	0.2	8.0	3.1	15.7	0.4	2.0	32.0
<i>(17) Sidewalk and Curb:</i>											
Construction and Maintenance	27.0	29.0		0.4		5.7	3.3	13.1	0.4	0.4	19.7
Roadside Mowing	13.5	33.5				11.9	4.4	26.9	0.2	0.4	8.8
Beautification	31.3	36.8		0.4	0.2	5.3	2.9	10.0	0.2	1.0	8.4
<i>(18) Utilities:</i>											
Water and Sewer:											
Water:											
Treatment	32.3	20.9	4.0	6.8		2.2		5.0	18.5	5.4	3.8
Distribution	29.8	33.4	3.8	7.5		2.3		4.2	10.7	3.6	3.6
Sanitary Sewer:											
Collection	27.9	34.5	4.1	7.0		2.1		6.2	9.1	4.3	3.5
Treatment	28.9	21.3	4.5	9.1		2.8		9.1	14.6	4.9	3.4
Storm Water:											
Management	29.2	33.3	0.8	3.0	0.4	7.4	1.5	12.7	3.0	2.8	3.6
Collection	32.4	32.6	0.8	2.1	0.2	5.8	1.8	11.9	3.7	1.8	4.3
Treatment	50.6	14.9	0.8	2.5	0.2	4.8	1.3	11.1	4.2	2.1	2.7
Water Metering and Billing	31.8	41.9	3.3	2.3		1.4	0.4	5.0	6.8	1.9	3.7
Gas	43.3	0.8	0.4	0.6			0.4	0.8	0.2	0.8	51.0
Electric	40.8	2.7	1.0	0.8			0.2	0.6	0.6	0.6	51.1
Cable	36.3	1.7	0.4	0.6			0.2	0.4	0.2	1.2	57.9

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Table 3 (Continued)

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				another municipality	a school district	the county	the state	the county	another municipality	a special authority/district	a private provider
	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k
<i>(19) Parking Services:</i>											
Lots and Structures	66.4	26.1						1.1		1.3	2.4
Meters	90.6	5.4						0.7		0.2	0.2
<i>(20) Internet Services:</i>											
Broadband	60.0	2.1		0.4		0.4		0.4	0.2	0.2	33.8
Wireless Internet (Wi-Fi)	65.1	1.9		0.9	0.2	0.6	0.2		0.2	0.2	26.7
<i>(21) Transit Services:</i>											
Public Bus System	62.4	2.9	0.4	1.2		2.9	0.4	12.3	2.5	10.7	3.1
Dial-a-Ride	49.7	7.7	0.6	2.9		3.5	0.4	16.1	2.9	9.0	5.3
<i>(22) Airport(s)</i>											
	74.4	3.5		0.7		1.3	1.3	9.9	1.1	3.5	2.2
<i>(23) Environmental Services:</i>											
Soil Quality and Conservation	24.3	6.9		0.4	0.2	8.1	15.6	33.7	0.6	3.7	3.0
Water Quality and Conservation	22.0	9.5		1.3	0.2	8.1	18.7	27.9	0.7	4.4	3.5
Watershed Management	19.1	11.9		3.5	0.4	10.3	14.5	25.2	1.2	7.2	3.3
Air Quality Regulation	31.4	2.5		0.4	0.2	4.5	27.1	20.8	0.2	2.7	1.8
Erosion Control Structures	24.6	8.0		0.4	0.2	7.8	13.8	33.3	0.4	2.9	2.5
Environmental Education	25.9	11.3		1.6	0.4	7.5	13.0	23.9		5.5	3.6
<i>(24) Health Services:</i>											
Hospitals/Clinics	59.7	2.0		2.4		1.3	0.2	8.7	2.0	0.9	21.0
<i>(25) Parks and Recreation:</i>											
Park(s)	16.1	57.1	0.6	3.8	1.4	5.0	2.2	7.3	2.6	2.2	0.8
Playgrounds	23.4	55.8	0.6	3.6	3.6	2.6	0.6	5.6	2.4	0.6	0.6
Community/Recreation Center(s)	50.8	26.5	1.0	3.4	3.2	2.2		6.1	1.8	1.2	2.2
Senior Center	42.5	25.6	0.6	5.2	2.5	3.3	0.2	9.2	3.3	2.7	3.5
Forestry Services	58.5	15.9	0.2	0.2		1.6	7.5	6.0		1.2	6.0
Golf Course(s)	69.4	5.7	0.2	1.0	0.2	0.4	0.6	3.8	1.3	0.8	15.1
Community Pool	71.9	9.6	0.9	1.7	4.1			4.7	1.1	0.6	3.4
Trails	45.0	28.8	0.6	2.7	0.8	2.7	4.5	9.0	1.2	2.0	1.4
Beach Facilities	68.9	11.7	0.2	1.7		2.3	3.8	7.2	1.5	0.6	0.2
Marina/Port Facilities	83.6	5.5	0.2	0.4		0.7	1.3	2.4	0.9	0.7	2.2
<i>(26) Cultural Services:</i>											
Museum/Art Gallery	68.5	8.3	0.4	1.9		1.3	0.6	4.0	1.7	1.9	8.1
Library	23.7	20.9	1.2	12.5	1.0	5.1	0.4	11.1	7.5	14.4	1.2
Zoo	90.5	0.7		0.4		0.4	0.2	2.4	1.3		0.7
Community Theater	78.0	3.8	0.2	1.3	1.1	0.8	0.2	1.7	2.1	1.3	7.6
Stadium(s)/Arena(s)	82.1	3.1	0.2	0.7	2.6	0.9	0.9	2.8	1.3	1.1	2.0
Entertainment Facilities	79.7	4.3	0.2	1.1	1.1	0.9	0.9	2.1	0.9	0.4	5.6

Note: Column for *Do Not Know How Service is Provided* omitted from this table due to space. Percentages do not add to 100 percent. The highlighting is only intended to point out frequent responses (25% or more) among all of the numbers.

ships) tend to rely most heavily on the county for services or cooperative arrangements. While the survey does not reveal extensive one-on-one cooperation among cities, villages, and townships, the extensive use of the counties as common providers of services indicates local governments often look outside their boundaries to efficiently provide services to their residents.

Still opportunities for an expanded role for counties are significant. Information technology offers an example of how the county role could grow. Many municipalities indicate a strong reliance on the counties for geographic information systems (GIS). However, the reported county role in website development and administration is negligible. Creating and maintaining a website requires some level of computer sophistication. While the task can be time consuming, it usually is not enough to warrant a full-time employee for a single website. County governments could provide computer space to host city, village, and township websites, employ a programmer to write code for creating and maintaining their websites, and offer an opportunity for all local governments to use this valuable tool to stay connected with their residents.

The *Catalog* also illustrates how efficiencies might result from a reassignment of some services from the cities and townships to the counties. For example, property assessing and tax collection are tasks usually performed by the cities and townships, as the most local units of government. The *Catalog* provides several examples of counties providing property assessment services on behalf of their cities and townships. By following the example these counties have set, and moving tax collections services as well, it would be possible to reduce the

number of assessing and tax collection agents from over 1,500 to only 83. At a time when many property owners rely on escrow accounts to pay their taxes and electronic transfers make the distance between parties irrelevant, county employees may be better suited to monitor property transactions and sales trends, and collect taxes throughout the whole county.

Privatization

The *Catalog* provides evidence that many local government services are provided by means of contracts with private businesses. Nearly every service had a survey respondent indicate the existence of some level of privatization. An analysis of the services for which many respondents indicated a private provider reveals two patterns. The services that cities, villages, and townships have turned over to private providers most often generally include: 1) those that require a high level of training – such as printing, accounting, computer system management, vehicle maintenance, engineering, surveying, and legal services – and 2) those that are labor intensive – such as janitorial services, road construction and maintenance, and solid waste collection. The *Catalog* shows that privatization is most common with local governments that serve at least 10,000 people and cities use privatization more than villages or townships.

Again, it is possible to identify possibilities for expanded efficiencies through the use of contracts. While the private sector has engaged new industries for business-business arrangements, the public sector has been slower to tap into these services. For

Services Most Frequently Indicated as Cooperative Ventures

- Fire Fighting/Rescue
- Library
- Water and Sewer
- Ambulance/EMS
- 911/Radio Communications
- Public Transit
- Water Metering and Billing
- Watershed Management
- Emergency & Disaster Response Planning
- Senior Center
- Property Assessing
- Building Inspection
- Park(s)
- Recycling

example, businesses offering payroll and benefit services alleviate the need for individual employers to employ staff for these purposes. By handling the payroll functions of many employers, these businesses are able to offer the services at a lower price than the cost to the unit of performing the function in-house.

Just like collaboration on service provision, local governments must overcome obstacles to using private providers. However, the *Catalog* shows that many local governments already rely heavily on this method of service provision. Opportunities for privatization in different services could lead to efficiencies.

Cooperation with School Districts

The survey shows that municipalities – cities, villages, and townships – and school districts operate in parallel but separate worlds. They work together out of necessity on issues such as tax collection and elections, but rarely work together out of choice, even when the services overlap – such as janitorial services, vehicle maintenance and storage, and information

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technology services. The most common category where cooperation with school districts was found is in the provision of parks, playgrounds, recreation centers, and senior centers. The common equipment needed to maintain parks and playgrounds suggests significant opportunities for enhanced cooperation with school districts in the future with resultant efficiencies for both types of local government.

Opportunities for More Cooperation

The survey identifies services well suited to cooperation but in which relatively few communities are engaged in cooperative arrangements. Primary among those is purchasing of governmental equipment and supplies. The equipment and material needed to provide local government services are fairly common – cars, paper, road salt, etc. – but few responses indicated cooperative efforts in pur-

chasing. With state, county, and sub-county purchasing consortia in place, the possibility for more collaboration in purchasing would seem substantial.

Parks and recreation provide another example of where collaboration may be natural. The financial conditions of many local units have caused the closure of parks and recreation facilities. By sharing the cost burden among several units, these services may become more affordable. The configuration of many of Michigan's local governments, with small cities or villages surrounded by larger townships, would seem to make this a natural fit.

Conclusion

The *Catalog of Local Government Services* shows that Michigan cities, villages, and townships cannot be characterized in simple terms. The menu of services provided by different units is broad and the methods used to pro-

vide those services equally diverse. Clearly most units provide services individually. It is our goal in creating the *Catalog* that local policymakers will learn from the alternative service delivery methods of others, such as cooperation with peer units; working with school districts, counties, and the state; and private contracts. Future studies may reassess the roles of the counties in the provision of services to capitalize on their regional nature.

A pattern of citizen resistance to cooperative arrangements for the provision of local government services may mean that the number of units currently engaged in such arrangements is less than would otherwise be the case. It is hoped that the *Catalog* will help citizens on the level of duplication that exists in the provision of some services and the multiple service delivery methods other municipalities have adopted.

The Citizens Research Council of Michigan plans to use the *Catalog of Local Government Services* (www.crcmich.org/PUBLICAT/2000s/2005/catalog.html) for future studies to expand on opportunities for efficiencies beyond what is written here. The information is made available at this time for others to use the data for their own needs. Responses for each participating unit are available as well as spreadsheets that group the responses by: county; type of government; and population group.

It is hoped that some of the units that did not respond will opt to do so for inclusion in the *Catalog*. Inclusion will allow for a fuller response on which to conduct future studies and allow peer units to benchmark themselves. Blank surveys can be downloaded from this site. When the *Catalog* has been updated due to the inclusion of additional units, it will be so noted.

CRC wishes to thank C. S. Mott Foundation, Earhart Foundation, Frey Foundation, Gilmore Foundation, and Community Foundation for Muskegon County. Thanks also go to Jered Carr and Kelly LeRoux from the Department of Political Science at Wayne State University; Elisabeth Gerber and Michelle Woolers from the Center for Local, State, and Urban Policy (CLOSUP) within the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy at the University of Michigan, and Naheed Huq from the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments for their time, guidance, and participation in this project.